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The influence of large classes in the English language teaching-learning
process in Ecuadorian high schools

TRABAJO DE TITULACIÓN

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DEDICATION

First of all, I dedicate this triumph to Almighty God for being our creator and my guide in this wonderful life. Thanks to God I had the courage of persevering. Sometimes I wanted to give up, but I have always been feeling that God tells me ; get up! ;go ahead! ;close to me everything can be achieved!

Then, I dedicate this work to my dear Mother for giving me the life and thus I can be the author of this new achievement in my life.

Finally, I dedicate it, to my loving wife, Carmen, who complements my life in every way with much love and friendship; to my daughter Thalía and son Jorge, who are exceptionally studious and bright; so together we defeated the hard times to make this dream a reality, a family success.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate the instructional, social, and psychological implications of large classes in the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian high schools. A quantitative method was used in this research.

In order to collect data, the instrument that was taken into consideration was a student questionnaire. The questionnaire contained 21 questions and was divided into three sections to show the instructional, social, and psychological effects of the English large classes.

For this study, a total of 195 students from a high school in Duran, Ecuador were selected. Students' age ranged from 14-20 years old, from basic education to 3rd year of bachelor. The results of this investigation were analysed quantitatively and qualitatively according with the academic, social, and psychological issues.

This study revealed that English teachers in large classes are not very familiar with students' basic needs. Group activities, pleasant relationships, and feedback from teachers are not good enough for enhancing student learning. Thus, the findings shed light on some practical strategies which may help the teaching and learning in large English classes.

Key words: Foreign language, Large classes, Secondary school, Students' perceptions.

RESUMEN

El propósito de este estudio es investigar las implicaciones académica, social, y psicológica de las clases numerosas en el proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje del idioma Inglés en las escuelas secundarias del Ecuador. Un método cuantitativo fue utilizado en esta investigación. Para la recolección de datos, el instrumento que fue tomado en consideración fue una encuesta al estudiante. El cuestionario contuvo 21 preguntas y estuvo dividido en 3 secciones para mostrar los efectos académico, social y psicológico de las clases numerosas de inglés.

Para este estudio, un total de 195 estudiantes de un colegio en Durán-Ecuador fueron seleccionados. La edad de los estudiantes osciló entre los 14 hasta los 20 años de edad, y ellos fueron desde educación básica hasta tercer año de bachillerato. Los resultados de esta investigación fueron analizados cuantitativa y cualitativamente de acuerdo con los aspectos académico, social y psicológico.

Este estudio reveló que los profesores de las clases grandes no están muy familiarizados con las necesidades básicas de los estudiantes. Las actividades de grupo, relaciones agradables y la retroalimentación de la clase de parte de los profesores no son del todo suficientes para que los estudiantes mejoren su aprendizaje. De este modo, los resultados traen a la luz algunas estrategias prácticas que podrían ayudar la enseñanza y aprendizaje en las clases grandes de inglés.

Palabras claves: Lengua extranjera, clases numerosas, escuela secundaria, las percepciones de los estudiantes.

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, educational institutions from diverse countries around the world are worried about the influence of large classes in the teaching English as a foreign language. A few years ago, some important decisions were made by the Ecuadorian government in different fields to improve the education in our country.

Large English classes are part of the reality of Ecuadorian high schools and they merit to be researched due to the fact that working with large classes could be both advantageous and disadvantageous. For this reason, it is important to research the topic “the influence of large classes in the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian high schools”

The main objective of this study is to determine the academic, social, and psychological implications that large classes have on teaching learning process of English as a foreign language. The study results will help to identify the needs of both students and teachers and educational institutions in general that are implied with the teaching and learning of the English language.

Some studies developed over the world were researched on internet (Journals) for gathering information about the factors that influence the teaching and learning English as a foreign language in large classes.

A first study was carried out by Bahanshal (2013), who had as general purpose of investigating teachers experience in teaching large classes to realize their perceptions towards teaching large classes. For collecting the data, this exploratory qualitative research employs personal interviews of six Saudi secondary English teachers from two public schools. Study results demonstrated that class size has a significant role in the teaching and learning process. Consequently, it is imperative to

explore various methods and apply effective strategies that minimize the effects of large classes and elevate the teaching and learning level to its highest standard.

The following is a study conducted by Thaher (2005) in order to determine the instructional, psychological or social effects of large classes on non-English major EFL students in a Palestine University by investigating their attitudes towards this problem. The study results showed that large classes affect the students' educational practices and performance, so instructional effects have the highest percentages over the social and the psychological effects.

Another study was carried out by Jimakom and Singhasiri (2006) to investigate teachers' beliefs in terms of perceptions, opinions and attitudes related with English's teaching in numerous classes. The outcomes demonstrated that the third level teachers deliberate that teaching English in large classes might be possible, but some aspects as teaching management, not enough attention and feedback, between others should be taken into consideration.

The obtained results will be important not only for the observed students or institution, but the whole community of students in the country who are involved in the process of learning English as a foreign language, so they could improve and potentiate their knowledge and skills which will allow them to reach academic and professional benefits. Furthermore, this study tries to contribute to other researchers regarding the teaching-learning process of English as a Foreign Language in the Ecuadorian high schools.

Finally, the only limitation in this research was on how students answered the questionnaire because the four-answer choices (very satisfactory, satisfactory, somewhat satisfactory, and unsatisfactory) were not fully understood by them, and so

Other options should have been considered in order to attain more reliable information.

METHOD

Setting and Participants

This study was conducted in a public high school in Duran, Ecuador. Five classes with more than 35 students in each one were selected as sample. The selected participants were students from eighth to third year of basic and senior high school, respectively, and the students in these classes were girls and boys with ages ranging from 14 to 20 years old who belong to a low-medium social economic class; In addition, students in each grade receive 5 hours of English classes per week

Procedures

To start this study, diverse investigation through online articles and journals, books, and the Didactic Guide was based on the information of methods, approaches, and techniques to the teaching and learning English as a foreign language. In addition, some previous studies about the influence of large classes in the English language-teaching process over the de world were investigated, and then this information was used to write the literature review, which was an important prior knowledge for the development of the field research.

The field research began with authorization of the principal and the English teachers from a public high school in Duran, Ecuador; after that, a structured questionnaire with twenty one questions was mainly used in this research. This questionnaire was divided in the instructional, social, and psychological issues with nine, five, and seven questions, respectively, and it was related to students' perceptions in the large English classes. Quantitative and qualitative methods were used for this study.

Continuing with this research, the questionnaire was distributed to all the

students in each of the five classes previously chosen by the English teachers. At the end of this field research, 195 students filled the questionnaire.

The data from the questionnaire were carefully organized and classified according with the instructional, social, and psychological issues. Afterwards, the tabulation of the survey's answers was carried out, and then the frequencies and percentages of the data gathered were presented in three charts considering the above matters.

Finally, the research's outcomes were illustrated by using a bar graph for each chart, so the outcome of each question was described and analyzed.

DISCUSSION

Literature Review

The influence of large classes in the English language teaching displays a great problem in our country as in the entire world which is worrying Ecuadorian English teachers of all levels in general and secondary teachers in particular, this study focuses on the challenges teachers and students come across daily in large classes in English language teaching learning; consequently, in the following section some of the most important methods, approaches, techniques will be mentioned as well as some studies and elements concerning the influence of the big classes in the teaching English as foreign language.

Teaching approaches and methods

One of these methods is Grammar Translation Method that has been used by language teachers for many years. It was thought that, through the study of the grammar of the target language, students would become more familiar with the grammar of their native language and that this familiarity would help them speak and write their native language better. Students study grammar deductively; that is, they are provided the grammar rules and examples, are commanded to memorize them, and then are requested to apply the rules to other examples. They also learn grammatical paradigms such as verb conjugations and memorize native-language equivalents for target-language vocabulary words (Larsen, 2000).

Furthermore, others researchers emphasize that grammar translation dominated European and foreign language teaching from the 1840s to the 1940s, and in modified form it persists to be broadly used in some parts of the world today. Besides, they claim that sentence is the main unit of teaching and language practice.

Much of the lesson is dedicated to translating sentences into and out of the target language, and it is this emphasis on the sentence that is a distinctive feature of the method (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Another teaching method is Natural Approach that shares certain traits with the direct method, and emphasis is involved on students' developing basic communication skills and vocabulary through their receiving meaningful exposure to the target language. The students listen to the teacher using the target language communicatively from the starting of instruction. The teacher helps the students to understand by using pictures and occasional words in the students' native language and by being as expressive as possible (Larsen, 2000).

Some authors as Krashen and Terrell mention that Natural Approach "is for beginners and is designed to help them become intermediates" (as cited in Richards & Rodgers, 2001). The students don't need to have a semantic particular knowledge of the words and that the vocabulary and syntax are perfect, but their production does need to be understood. The extent to which they can lose themselves in activities catching meaningful communication will determine the amount and kind of acquisition they will feel and the fluency they will ultimately demonstrate (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Then, James Asher's Total Physical Response affirms that the fastest, least difficult way to achieve understanding of any target language is to follow directions spoken by the instructor (as cited in Larsen, 2000). The first phase of a lesson is one of modeling, so the instructor delivers directions to a few students, and then performs the actions with them. In the second phase, these same students demonstrate that they can understand the directions by performing them alone. After learning to respond to

some oral commands, the students learn to read and write them. When students are arranged to speak, they become the ones who issue the orders (Larsen, 2000).

Similarly, Asher argues that “most of the grammatical structure of the target language and hundreds of vocabulary items can be learned from the skillful use of the imperative by the instructor” (as cited in Richards & Rodgers, 2001). He notices the verb and particularly the verb in the imperative, as the crucial linguistic reason around which language use and learning are organized.

The general objectives of total physical response are to teach oral proficiency at a beginning level, comprehension is a means to an end, and the ultimate aim is to teach basic speaking skills. Students are encouraged to speak when they feel ready to speak, in other words, when a sufficient basis in the language has been included. Therefore, the teacher plays an active and direct role in total physical response, and it is the teacher who decides what to teach, who models and presents the new materials (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Concerning Whole language educators believe that students learn best not when they are learning language piece by piece, but rather when they are working to understand the meaning of whole texts “Therefore whole language educator provide content-rich curriculum where language and thinking can be about interesting and significant content” (Altwerger, Edelsky & Flores 1991, as cited in Larsen, 2000). As a social process, it is expected that learning is best assisted by collaboration between teacher and students and among students (Larsen, 2000).

Furthermore, whole language approach emphasizes learning to read and write naturally with a focus on real communication and reading and writing for pleasure. Research on whole language has found that “Language use is always in a social

context and this applies to both oral and written language, to both first and second language use” (Rigg 1991, as cited in Richards & Rodgers, 2001). The teacher is seen as a supporter and an active participant in the learning community, and the learner is a coworker, collaborating with fellow students, with the teacher, and with writers of texts. Whole language instruction promotes the use of real world materials rather than commercial texts. A piece of literature is an example of “real world” materials (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Cooperative language learning is an instructional approach also known as collaborative learning that essentially involves students learning from each other in groups. But it is not the group configuration that makes cooperative learning distinctive; it is the way that students and teachers work together that is important. In fact, Jacobs affirms that cooperation is not only a way of learning, but also a theme to be communicated about and studied (as cited in Larsen, 2000). Students are encouraged to think in terms of ‘positive interdependence,’ which means that the students are not thinking competitively and individualistically, but rather cooperatively and in terms of the group (Larsen, 2000).

As well cooperative language learning (CLL) is an approach designed to develop critical thinking skills, and the primary role of the learner is as a member of a group who must work collaboratively on tasks with other group members. They are taught to plan, monitor, and evaluate their own learning, which is viewed as a compilation of lifelong learning skills (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Communicative language teaching emphasizes the interdependence of language and communication. The most obvious characteristic of CLT is that almost everything that is done is done with a communicative intent. The students use much

of the language through communicative activities such as games, role plays, and problem-solving tasks, so the activities are truly communicative (Larsen, 2000).

Besides, Richards and Rodgers (2001) affirm that communicative language teaching for some implies little more than an integration of grammatical and functional teaching. Littlewoods says that “One of the most characteristic features of communicative language teaching is that it pays systematic attention to functional as well as structural aspects of language (as cited in Richards & Rodgers, 2001).” For others, it means using procedures where learners work in pairs or groups using available language resources in problem-solving tasks. The primary units of language are not merely its grammatical and structural features, but categories of functional and communicative meaning as exemplified in discourse.

Once that some more significant methods and approaches have been seen and analyzed, other factors in the field of English teaching will be also introduced. It is known that good or extraordinarily good classes cannot be done or prepared just by applying the different methods and approaches already mentioned for the reason that there are other factors to be taken into account when teaching English to students.

Class size

Flood, Lapp, Jensen, and Squire (2003) assert that teachers have always wanted smaller classes, and over the years they have been uniformly insistent in their claims that smaller classes create a more desirable learning environment, result in better student attainment, and make their own professional lives more satisfying. Smith and Glass indicate that “students in smaller classes had stronger motivation, better self-concept, and less anxiety” (as cited in Flood, Lapp, Jensen & Squire, 2003). In a study of McDonald determined that classes of 15 or fewer were connected with

improved students writing, because they made it possible for students to receive more feedback and do more revising under supervision (as cited in Flood et al., 2003).

Another explanation about class size is carried out by Wang and Finn. They assert that due to the sense of smallness of the small classes there is a bigger opportunity to attain a community sense that is difficult to feel it in the big class; therefore, this is what determines the success of the education but not the percentage of students assigned to the teacher (as cited in Blatchford, 2003 p. 145)

Managing learning

Gower, Phillips, and Walters (2005) state that short instructions are entirely appropriate to this situation where the students accept their authority. Also, they usually realize that a firm directive manner is necessary in order to make a good language practice and to avoid confusion and uncertainty. Sometimes students need a little time before they get going while others get on with the task immediately. By providing ongoing feedback you can help your students evaluate their achievement and progress. Feedback can take a number of forms: giving praise and encouragement; correcting; setting regular tests; having discussions about how the group as a whole is doing; giving individual tutorials; etc.

In Addition, Woolfolk (2007) supports that since the aim of classroom management is to maintain a positive, productive learning environment some studies have found that teachers' presentations take up one-sixth to one fourth of all classroom time. Dealing with discipline problems, an efficient manager should not visibly correcting every slight infraction of the rules. In fact, Irving and Martin affirmed that teachers who commonly correct students do not essentially have the

best behaved classes (as cited in Woolfolk, 2007).

Managing large classes

Hall (2011) states that it is difficult to define what is meant by a 'large class'. Hayes focuses on classes of fifty or more (as cited in Hall, 2011), Coleman points out, not only does class size vary, so also do teachers' perceptions of the point at which a class becomes large (as cited in Hall, 2011). Moreover, Brown and Johnson emphasize that large classes are often perceived as being problematic and are given explicit attention in many teacher training and development texts (as cited in Hall, 2011). Also, Harmer suggests that the effective teaching in big classes depends upon teacher organization, the establishment of clear routines, and the use of individual, pair, and group activities (as cited in Hall, 2011).

Additionally, around to work with large classes Race and Wharton (1999) state that the following suggestions among others should help you to cope with the practical demands of large classes: Address learners by name whenever you can helps learners to feel that you are aware of them as individuals and that their presence and contribution in class are important. Supervision tasks like recording attendance, distributing and collecting materials, and sharing around resources can be time consuming in a large class. Pair and group work it is also an excellent opportunity for helping learners begin to develop independent learning skills, which will be particularly useful to them in a large class environment. Finally, taking selective feedback on group activities some of the groups who you were not able to monitor could be invited to report to the class on what they did.

Activities for working with large classes

Byram (2004) states that classroom control and management problems can be

reduced by getting to know students' names rapidly e.g. using seating plans and giving individual attention; by reducing noise levels, for instance, talking or whispering quietly in pairs, regulating activities by quick responses to teacher signals; by keeping activities brief and by ensuring that students know to do an easing transitions from one task to another, for example, using clear signals and instructions, demonstrations and examples. Students' commitment in activities, particularly for oral skills, can be facilitated by working in pairs or groups. This can be managed despite the frequently encountered difficulties of lack of space and crowded fixed seating, by using short, purposeful activities with pre-organized pairs.

As well, Wang (2011) affirms that the crucial is to what level and which teachers of English language would motivate students' initiatives, interests and participation. If the teacher designs some quizzes for the whole class, one of students in a group could be a representative standing up to give the answers, or the teacher could walk to every group for students' opinions, then the teacher could explain these answers to the whole class, only by doing this way can most students take active part in class teaching.

Classroom space and seating arrangement

Woolfolk (2007) states that spaces for learning should invite and support the activities you plan in your classroom, and they should respect the inhabitants of the space, thus a school that has won awards for its architecture paints each classroom door a different bright color, so young children can find their "home" (Herbert, 1998, as cited in Woolfolk, 2007). Once inside, spaces can be created that invite quiet reading, group collaboration, or independent research. If students are to use materials, they should be able to reach them.

Additionally, West (2010) declares that for an English teacher who wishes to attempt drama in the classroom or who intends to deliver an individual approach to teaching or a more personalized pattern of student interaction, life can be made difficult due to lack of space. For drama in the classroom, it is possible to move desks and chairs to the far end of the classroom. It is a good idea to change available space and kept the classroom flexible, depending upon the activity. For example, desks can be placed in a horseshoe arrangement in the center of the classroom, with chairs along each side for those not taking part in that particular debate.

Different levels of proficiency

Carr, Lagunoff, and Sexton (2007) argue that the teacher arrange groups of working, and the students have a full chance to involve in varied communication skills, including rephrasing asking for clarification, and using their native language. The advantage of heterogeneous groups is that novice English students face the “model” language use from English students more advanced.

Also, Thomas (2006) states that sometimes it is noticed by forming a group with the same (or similar) proficiency levels so that they can challenge each other at their own similar levels of language and not be intimidated by higher-proficiency students or become disinterested because of lower-proficiency levels of other students in the group. Jacobs and Hall suggest that when the students have mastered cooperative learning in groups, they could begin to group themselves according to subject interest levels (as cited in Thomas, 2006).

Having seen and read about some approaches and methods amongst some other important information about English large classes on teaching and learning taken from different sources, some previous studies will be now introduced to better clarify

the importance of English and how it is perceived, taught, learnt and understood in different parts of the world.

Firstly, Jimakorn and Singhasiri (2006) carried out a study to investigate teachers' beliefs in terms of perceptions, opinions, and attitudes towards teaching English in large classes. In order to access the opinions and perceptions of the teachers, it was decided to use a questionnaire. The questionnaire was piloted with the teaching staff of the Department of Language, School of Liberal Arts, KMUTT. It is composed of three parts with open-ended questions, closed-ended questions and rating scales. Part I, open-ended questions, asks for the participant's personal details, gender, teaching experience, education and where they currently worked. Part II, closed-ended questions, concerns the participant's knowledge of their university's policy on class size. Facts and Opinions on Large Classes was in Part III.

Participants' responses were analyzed descriptively by calculating percentages and average scores, in order to determine what trends in the data suggested about the teachers' attitudes and perceptions towards learning and teaching in large classes.

In conclusion, Thai teachers thought that teaching in large classes was difficult in several aspects such as the relationships of teachers and students, monitoring and giving feedback and assessment. However, teachers also suggested ways to deal with large classes. With references to the results of this study, it is quite essential for the executive administrators to understand teachers' attitudes and their beliefs as well as the nature of language learning and teaching. Also, teachers themselves may need to be trained in how to teach and manage in large classes.

The second, was a study conducted by Nakabugo (2008) who carried out a research considered as a starting point inventing means of promoting the learning in

the small and big classes that enables all learners to access quality education and attain education levels that give them knowledge, skills, positive values and attitudes to live a good life. Additionally, a qualitative study was undertaken in 20 primary schools in order to better comprehend the process that might be involved in the teaching of large classes.

The sites and subjects of study were selected purposefully using the Education Management Information System (EMIS). The data collection was generated from interviews and lesson observations of 35 teachers (31 females and 4 males), distributed in 20 primary schools.

All the 35 teachers studied were professionally trained: two bachelors' degree holders, seventeen diploma holders and sixteen Grade III certificate holders. Data was analyzed using the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss 1967, as cited in Nakabugo, 2008). Comparisons were made across the teachers being studied and the different types of data collection instruments. For example, data from lesson observations were used to establish congruence and/or contradiction between what the teachers said and what they actually did while they taught large classes.

In conclusion all teachers tried out a wide range of strategies including team-teaching, co-teaching, creating friendly classroom environments, improvising instructional materials, and group work. It was realized from the teachers' reflections that for any strategy to work, it needed time to try it out, confidence to take risks, as well as being open to other colleagues' suggestions. The study findings suggest that as low-income countries and development partners pull resources together to widen access to primary education, matters of teaching and learning quality should be at the forefront.

The next research was directed by Bahanshal (2013) who conveyed a study in order to investigate two aspects: first to ascertain the impact of large classes on the teaching and learning outcomes, and second to suggest appropriate strategies that Saudi secondary teachers can utilize in their large classes to facilitate English teaching and learning. The general purpose of investigating teachers experience in teaching large classes was to realize their perceptions towards teaching large classes.

It is necessary to obtain the insider's view of the case by studying the participants' perceptions and the effect of class size on the teaching and learning process. In a case as such, a qualitative approach seems best convenient to classify these issues as it is interested on people as the tool of inquiry. It also consists of data that focuses on observation, interviews and surveys. For collecting the data, this exploratory qualitative research employs personal interviews of six Saudi secondary English teachers from two public schools. in this interview, the researcher concentrated on class size and asked each participant to describe the size of the class using a four point scale as follow: 1) very large, 2) large, 3) average, 4) small. To reach the aim of this study, the Saudi English teachers were interviewed to express their perceptions about teaching in large classes.

In short, taken together the literature review and the study finding we can say that class size has a significant role in the teaching and learning process. Therefore, it is important to explore various methods and apply effective strategies that minimize the effects of large classes and elevate the teaching and learning level to its highest standard. Hence, the effectiveness of any techniques may vary from one context to another as it relies heavily on different aspects such as students, teachers and facilities available in a certain school.

The following study was developed by Kati (2010) who supported a study with the purpose of discovering the diverse common expectations of the students inside the classroom where the students are learning English in varied ways and the classes are numerous.

For the questionnaire survey, sixty students of tenth grade from government-aided school were selected to get required information. Thirty students were from Ramechhap district and thirty from Kathmandu valley representing rural and urban area of Nepal respectably. The population was sampled using purposive non-random sampling procedure. To collect primary data, one structured questionnaire was developed containing nineteen closed ended questions. Students were asked to tick the both nominal and ordinal alternatives

In conclusion the study reveals many findings at a time regarding the expectations of students in large multilevel classes. Many teachers do not seem to make trouble to learn of students' names, but in this study more than ninety percent students reported that they like to be called by their first names. This study also proves that an English teacher should move all around the class. In the data, more than ninety percent students reported that they expect additional activities more than of textbook in a large heterogeneous class, there is no alternative of developing a collaborative working atmosphere, providing a variety of works and making all students involved in various activities appropriate for different levels.

The last research was developed by Thaher (2005), who conducted this study to determine the effects instructional, psychological or social that large classes have on students by investigating and analyzing EFL students' attitudes toward large classes at An-Najah National University in Palestine. Additionally, this study

proposes eight questions to be replied at end of this investigation and specifically to determinate the instructional, psychological and social effects of large classes on non-English major EFL students at An-Najah National University.

The data for the questionnaire was collected according to feedback from the students at An-Najah. The researcher asked the students an open –ended question about the effect of large classes on them. After gathering the data, the answers were classified into three major areas: instructional, psychological and social which were considered as the study instrument by the researcher in the form of a questionnaire.

The researcher distributed the questionnaire to the sample study students (230 students). The questionnaire included two versions (Arabic and English). The subjects responded to the questionnaire in Arabic on a 5-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree; 2= disagree; 3=undecided; 4=agree; 5=strongly agree).The questionnaire contained 46 items and was divided into the following sections:1-Items (1-19) showed the instructional effects of large classes on non- English major EFL students. 2-Items (20-32) showed the psychological effects of large classes on non-English major EFL students. 3-Items (33-46) showed the social effects of large classes on non-English major EFL students.

The results of the different domains show that the instructional effects domain has the highest mean (3.42) while the means for the social and the psychological effects are (3.38 and 3.28) respectively. It is found in this study that classroom interactions in large classes are negatively associated with class size. Students demonstrated negative and positive responses towards large classes. It is important to point out that while dealing with the negative instructional effects which large classes have on EFL students, teachers should take into consideration the social and

the psychological effects since these effects are interrelated. Additionally, the researcher recommends some ways to reduce the negative effects of large classes on non-English major EFL students.

In summary, it is observed that the influence of large classes in the English language teaching concerns many aspects. Among those aspects some methods, approaches, and techniques have been presented. It has also been observed that some studies and investigations have been conducted by many researchers for decades and decades in order to obtain some new information about English large classes, the way students could possibly learn better, the dimension of a class, the number of students in class and even how desks and chairs should be arranged to have a well-structured class.

Description, Analysis, and Interpretation of Results

This section contains a Quantitative Analysis of the results obtained from the student's questionnaire. This analysis is focused on the frequency, and tabulation of the twenty one questions that are part of the student's questionnaire. The analysis is based on the instructional, social, and psychological implications that large classes have in the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian high schools.

One hundred ninety five participants' responses from questionnaire are tabulated in three statistical charts by calculating frequencies and percentages in order to determine students' attitudes and perceptions toward English teaching learning in large classes on a four- point scale (totally agree; agree; partially agree; disagree). Afterwards, the results are illustrated in three bar graphics for analysis.

Quantitative Analysis

Academic issues

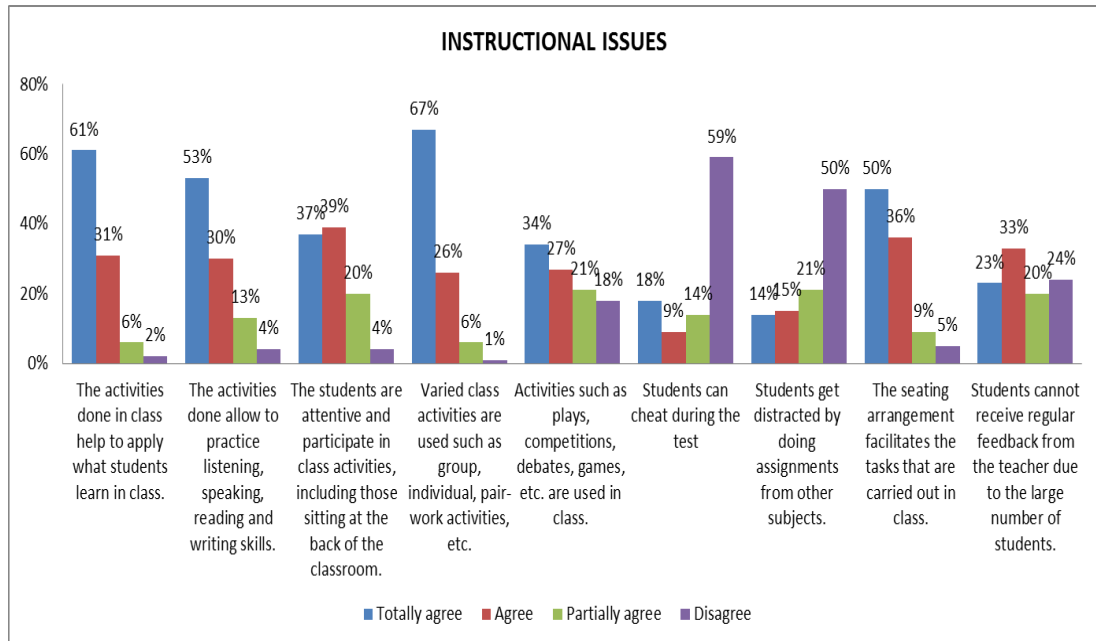
What instructional implications do large classes have on the teaching learning process?

N°	Statements	Totally Agree		Agree		Partially agree		Disagree		Total	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1.	The activities done in class help to apply what students learn in class.	119	61%	60	31%	12	6%	4	2%	195	100%
2.	The activities done allow to practice listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.	103	53%	58	30%	26	13%	8	4%	195	100%

3.	The students are attentive and participate in class activities, including those sitting at the back of the classroom.	72	37%	76	39%	39	20%	8	4%	195	100%
4.	Varied class activities are used such as group, individual, pair-work activities, etc.	131	67%	50	26%	11	6%	3	1%	195	100%
5.	Activities such as plays, competitions, debates, games, etc. are used in class.	66	34%	53	27%	41	21%	35	18%	195	100%
6.	Students can cheat during the test	36	18%	17	9%	27	14%	11 5	59%	195	100%
7.	Students get distracted by doing assignments from other subjects.	28	14%	29	15%	40	21%	98	50%	195	100%
8.	The seating arrangement facilitates the tasks that are carried out in class.	98	50%	69	36%	18	9%	10	5%	195	100%
9.	Students cannot receive regular feedback from the teacher due to the large number of students.	46	23%	64	33%	39	20%	46	24%	195	100%

Source: Student's Questionnaire

What instructional implications do large classes have on the teaching learning process?



Author: Euro Guevara Calderon
Source: Student's Questionnaire

According to the results showed in the statement 1, out of 100% (195) students surveyed, 61% of students are in total agreement, 31% are in agreement, 6% are in partial agreement, and 2% are in disagreement. It shows that most of students totally agree that the teacher supports student's practical tasks to strengthen the theoretical teaching, and this means that teachers do not expect students simply listen and memorize what they have learned, but also teachers during the teaching and learning process are generally using practical strategies to check student active learning in the classroom; for instance, short partner discussions, participation in the class, and collaborate with each other.

Regarding to the results in statement 2, from 100% of surveyed students on five classes in the public high school, 53% of students are in total agreement, 30%

are in agreement, furthermore, 13% and 4% of students are partially agree and disagree, respectively. It explains that teachers in this public high school usually involve students in whole activities that allow them to learn all language skills at the same time. Some of these class activities could be listening to songs, pronunciation practice, fill in the blank sheets, and dialogues that encourage students in all areas of language learning.

Referring to the results showed in the statement 3 and considering the students' questionnaire, from 100% of students surveyed in the five classes from this public high school in Duran, 37% of students are totally in agreement, 39% are in agreement, 20% are partially in agreement, but 4% of students are not in agreement. It means that the teacher is often arranging activities that engage students' attention, by developing active learning within a numerous class through activities such as small-group work, pair work, etc. In the same way, students' activities in groups are recommend by Race and Wharton (1999) who say that pair and group work it is also a good opportunity for helping learners develop independent learning skills, which will be particularly useful to them in a large class environment.

Taken into account to the results showed in the statement 4 from students' questionnaire, 67% of students are totally in agreement, 26% are in agreement; even though, 6% are partially in agreement, and 1% is in disagreement. These percentages include almost all the study participants; therefore, very few students partially approve or they do not approve that such activities are given by the teacher, who promotes the student interaction, by working mostly with this kind of activities into the classroom. In fact, Harmer suggests that the effective teaching in large classes depends upon teacher organization, the establishment of clear

routines, and the use of individual, pair, and group activities (as cited in Hall, 2011).

Results in the statement 5 demonstrate that from 100% of students surveyed in the five classes of a public high school in Duran, 34% of students are in total agreement, 27% are in agreement; admitting that, 21% are in partial agreement, and 18% are not in agreement. Previous data show that students are sometimes involved in real communication activities that set up a competitive atmosphere within the class. In general, Larsen (2000) states that students use much of the language through communicative activities such as games, role plays, and problem-solving tasks, so the activities are truly communicative.

According to the results in the statement 6, out of 100% of answers, 18% of students are in total agreement, 9% are in agreement; also, 14% and 59% of the students are in partial agreement and in disagreement, respectively. It indicates that the students do not receive a clear explanation about the prohibition of cheating during the exams, and it is evident that students always find the manner of adventure in this immodest act perhaps due to the lack of effort or knowledge; without doubt, the teachers' problems elicited in these large classes are emphasized by Brown and Johnson (as cited in Hall, 2011) who stress that large classes are often supposed as being problematical and are given explicit attention in many teacher training and development texts.

Considering the results from statement 7, from 100% of students surveyed in this public high school in Duran, 14% of students are in total agreement, 15% are in agreement; besides, 21% and 50% of students are in partial agreement and in disagreement, respectively. These percentages confirm that a considerable number of

students get distracted doing other assignments inside the classroom, and it proves that neither of the teachers reviews the discipline norms in order to apply a better control of the student's discipline, nor gather the attention of all students; for instance, walking around, speaking out loud, and doing short breaks; in effect, the following strategies are focused by Byram (2004). He says that classroom control and management problems can be decreased by getting to know students' names rapidly, by using seating plans, and giving individual attention.

According to the results from student's questionnaire in the statement 8, out of 100% (195), 50% of students are in total agreement, 36% are in agreement, 9% are in partial agreement, but 5% of students are not in agreement. These percentages enclose that arrangement in this high school encompasses a tolerable environment in terms of space and arrangement that facilitates carry out varied class activities for learning, but also it can be because the teacher is always able to teach in difficult seating arrangement, or both elements could be appropriate for the English teaching and learning.

According to the results drawn in the statement 9, out of 100% (195) of surveyed students in this public high school, 23% of students are in total agreement, 33% are in agreement; moreover, 20% and 24% of students are in a partial agreement and in disagreement, respectively. It shows that the teacher does not take into consideration each student individually when giving feedback, so students do not receive the same level of advice in these large classes, and they have little chance to interact with the teacher who reveals difficulty to encourages equally their students; in general, the students do not receive a suitable feedback during the learning in this public high school, and for demonstrating, Gower, Phillips, and Walters (2005) state

that by providing ongoing feedback you can help your students evaluate their achievement and progress; for instance, having discussions about how the group as a whole is doing; giving praise and encouragement, giving individual tutorials, correcting, and so forth.

Social issues

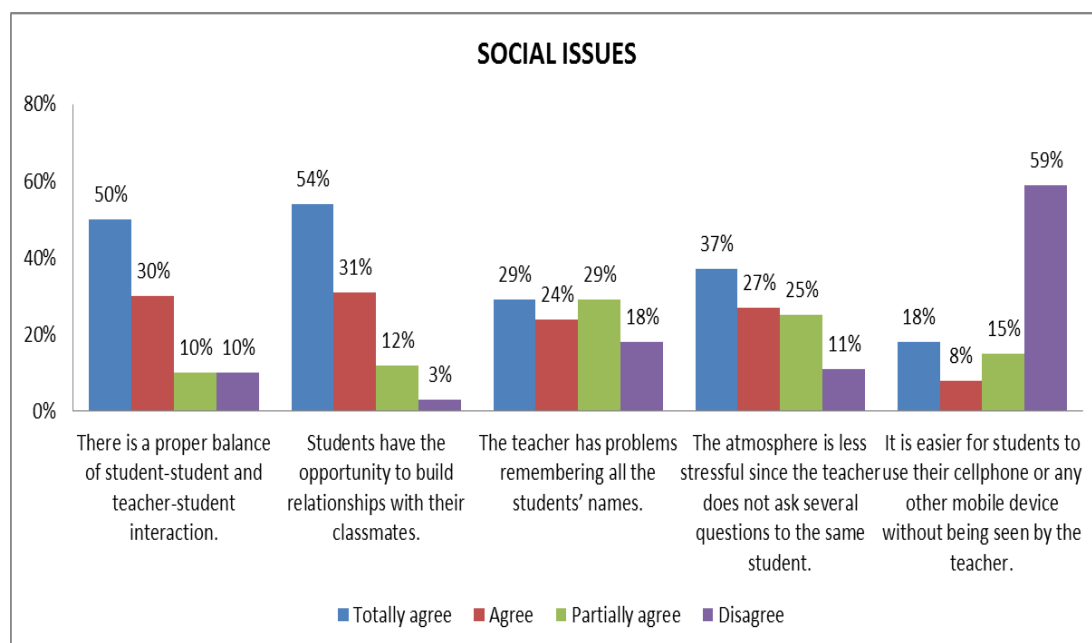
What social implications do large classes have on the teaching learning process?

N°	In classes with a large number of students:	Totally Agree		Agree		Partially agree		Disagree		Total	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
10.	There is a proper balance of student-student and teacher-student interaction.	98	50%	58	30%	20	10%	19	10%	195	100%
11.	Students have the opportunity to build relationships with their classmates.	106	54%	60	31%	23	12%	6	3%	195	100%
12.	The teacher has problems remembering all the students' names.	57	29%	46	24%	56	29%	36	18%	195	100%
13.	The atmosphere is less stressful since the teacher does not ask several questions to the same student.	73	37%	53	27%	48	25%	21	11%	195	100%
14.	It is easier for students to use their cell phone or	35	18%	15	8%	30	15%	115	59%	195	100%

any other mobile device without being seen by the teacher.										
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Author: Euro Guevara Calderon
Source: Student's Questionnaire

What social implications do large classes have on the teaching learning process?



Author: Euro Guevara Calderon
Source: Student's Questionnaire

According to the results revealed in the statement 10, from 100% (195) of students surveyed in the five classes of the public high school in Duran, 50% of them are totally in agreement, 30% are in agreement, and the rest of students are in partial agreement and in disagreement, both of them with a similar percentage of 10%. It is important to underline that the teacher does not teach students the adequate way on how communicating and collaborating with each other and the teacher through class activities such as debate, role play, interview, interactive demonstrations, and so on. Indeed, English teachers from these five classes do not teach as Larsen (2000) says

that as a social process, it is predictable that learning is best supported by collaboration among students and between teacher and students.

Analyzing the results in the statement 11, from 100% surveyed students in the public high school, 54% of students are totally in agreement and 31% are in agreement: furthermore, 12% of students are in partial agreement and 3% are not in agreement. These percentages show only 3% of students do not accept that into the classroom exists the chance to engage a lot of friends; as a consequence, the teacher uphold a regular interaction between students from different background in these large classes, so teachers who foster positive relationships with their students create classroom environments more conducive to learning and meet students' developmental.

According with the results in the statement 12, from 100% of students surveyed in the five classes of this public high school, 29% of the students are in total agreement, 24% of them are in agreement, but the other students, 29% are partially in agreement and 18% are in disagreement. Results prove that a large number of students acknowledge that some students' names are not remembered by the English teachers, so the teacher demonstrates difficulty to learn students' names because of the lack of class activities more communicative such as a short quiz at the beginning of class over student's names; therefore, students are barely asked by the teacher who does not use student's names as often as possible; speaking about this, Race and Wharton (1999) explain that address learners by name at any time you can helps learners to feel that you are attentive of them as individuals, and that their presence and contribution in class is important.

Considering the results in the statement 13, out of 100% from 195 students surveyed, a 37% of students are totally in agreement, 27% are in agreement; in addition, 25% are in partial agreement, and 11% are not in agreement. Remarking previous results, the highest percentage of students totally recognize that they feel well because they are suddenly questioned by the teacher. So that, the students are not encouraged to question each other or do questions after an explanation of a difficult point, and as a result students receive a few questions in classes from the teacher, who demonstrates not be able to work in large classes because students feel well without actively participating in the classroom.

According to the results in the statement 14, out of 100% of surveyed students, the 18% of participants are in total agreement, 8% are in agreement: though, 15% are partially in agreement, and 59% are in disagreement. Analyzing the above results, students are not accurately controlled by the teacher during class activities, so the teacher does not know methods and strategies of teaching English, or he/she does not use them accurately to encourage students' attention in classes; as for this, some techniques are recommended by Woolfolk (2007) who argues that teachers' presentations take up one-sixth to one fourth of all classroom time dealing with discipline problems; thus, an effective manager does not mean publicly correcting every slight infraction of the rules.

Psychological issues

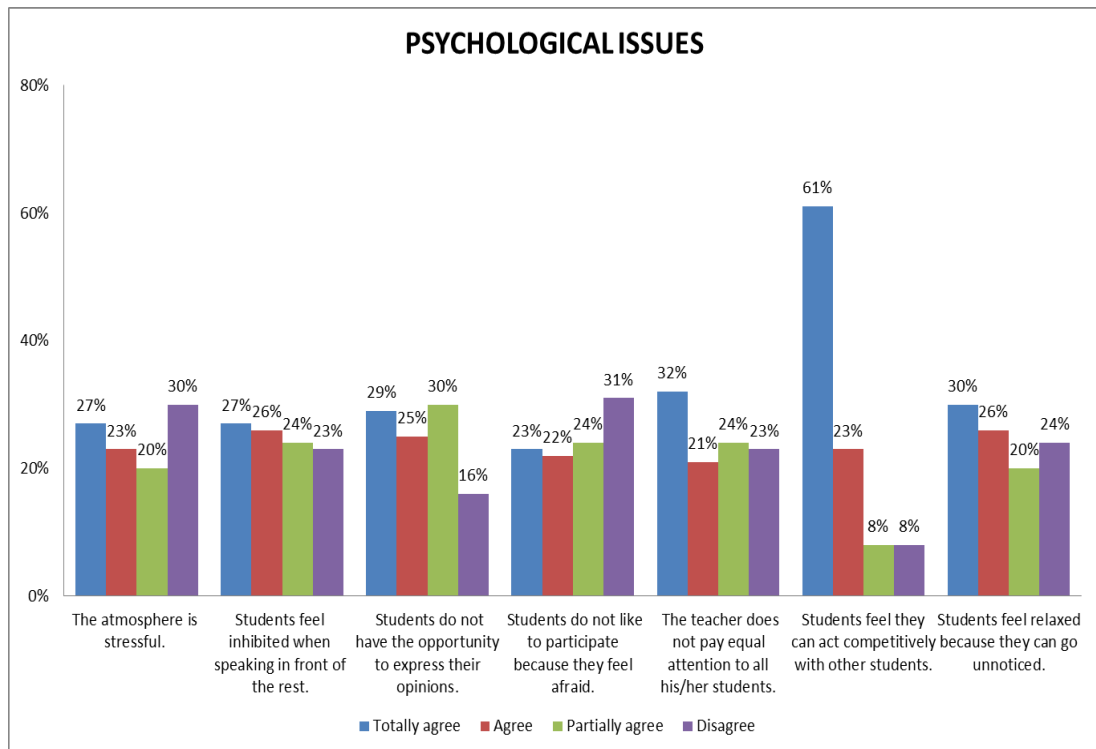
What psychological implications do large classes have on the teaching learning process?

N°	Statements	Totally Agree		Agree		Partially agree		Disagree		Total	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%

15	The atmosphere is stressful.	53	27%	44	23%	40	20%	58	30%	195	100%
16	Students feel inhibited when speaking in front of the rest.	53	27%	51	26%	47	24%	44	23%	195	100%
17	Students do not have the opportunity to express their opinions.	57	29%	48	25%	58	30%	32	16%	195	100%
18	Students do not like to participate because they feel afraid.	45	23%	44	22%	46	24%	60	31%	195	100%
19	The teacher does not pay equal attention to all his/her students.	62	32%	42	21%	46	24%	45	23%	195	100%
20	Students feel they can act competitively with other students.	119	61%	45	23%	16	8%	15	8%	195	100%
21	Students feel relaxed because they can go unnoticed.	58	30%	50	26%	39	20%	48	24%	195	100%

Author: Euro Guevara Calderon
Source: Student's Questionnaire

What psychological implications do large classes have on the teaching learning process?



Author: Euro Guevara Calderon
Source: Student's Questionnaire

According to the results presented in the statement 15, from 100% of surveyed students (195 students) in this public high school, 27% of students are in total agreement, 23% are in agreement; as well, 20% are in partial agreement, and the 30% are in disagreement with this subject matter. It shows that half of students acknowledge that the atmosphere is tense in large classes, so the activities such as changing the classroom desk arrangement, dynamics, conversations, and feedback are not sufficiently carried out by the teacher. Hence, teachers do not scope in these classes what Woolfolk (2007) states that the goal of classroom management is to preserve a friendly, productive learning environment.

According to the results indicated in the statement 16, from 100% of students surveyed in the public high school, 27% of them are totally in agreement, 26% are in

agreement: besides, 24% are partially in agreement, and the 23% of students are not in agreement. It is important to give emphasis the above results because more than half of students recognize that they feel shy when speaking in front of classmates. In this way, a great percentage of students become inhibited when they speak in front of the entire class because they are viewed as a whole group, and thus teachers do not encourage clear guidelines that ensure the student's motivation; for example, by allowing students choose a topic according with their own interests.

According to the results in the statement 17 from students' questionnaire, out of 100% of students surveyed in this public high school, 29% of students are in total agreement, 25% are in agreement; in spite of, 30% are in partial agreement, and only 16% are in disagreement. Data show up that students do not receive the same level of consideration in these large classes, so only a few students have the opportunity to express their opinions. Besides, the teacher does not use methods to collect information about students' perception; for instance, questionnaires and interviews; consequently, strategies and techniques used by teachers in this public high school are not suitable, and about this Wang (2011) explains that the teacher could check all groups for students' opinions, then the teacher could explain these answers to the whole class, only by doing this way can most students take active part in class teaching.

Taking the results presented in the statement 18 from student's questionnaire, 23% of students are totally in agreement, 22% are in agreement; moreover, 24% are partially in agreement, and 31% are in disagreement. These results gather almost the half of students who feel fear at the moment for participating in the class. It clarifies that not all learners are able to participate in classes due to the fact that feedback is

limited to a few of them; in consequence, class activities such as individualized tutorials, oral classes, and discussions are not enough; so that, the lack of students' motivation by the teacher it is noticeable.

According to the results in the statement 19 from student's questionnaire, out of 100% of students surveyed in the public high school, 32% of students are totally in agreement, 21% are in agreement: additionally, 24% are in partial agreement, and 23% are not in agreement. The highest students' percentages admit not to receive a similar attention from the teacher. It proves that the classroom control and learning management enclose some difficulties for the teacher resulting into indiscipline acts such as excessive noise, so students do not have a good predisposition for participating with the rest; additionally, the teacher is not aware about activities such as make eye contact with students, check in with students about how they are progressing with an assignment, call on students in classes, strategic seating, and so forth.

Considering the results in the statement 20, from 100% surveyed students, 61% of students are in total agreement, 23% are in agreement, and the other students are in partial agreement as in disagreement, with a similar percentage of 8% one another. In the above graph, a high percentage of students approve that there is a competitive environment among students in the classroom. It indicates that the teacher carries out some real communication activities; although, the results also show that this competitiveness is not for all students within the class, and it can be due to lack of activities such as to divide the class into teams, increase student participation, develop games, create a positive classroom environment, along with others.

According to the results given in the statement 21, out of 100% of students

surveyed in the public high school, 30% of students are in total agreement, 26% are in agreement; besides, 20% are in partial agreement, and 24% are not in agreement. These outcomes show that a high percentage of students admit to feel the relaxed atmosphere into the classroom just as they are not taken into account, so the students always are 'hidden work; because of this, it is proved that teachers do not enroll with students into interactive and dynamic activities to create an environment that supports an open communication; for instance, information gap, games, individual student conferences, oral presentations, group work, and so forth. In fact, Race and Wharton (1999) declares that taking selective feedback on group activities some of the groups who teachers were not able to monitor could be invited to report to the class on what they did.

Conclusions

- ❖ Most of students accomplish class activities that help them to put into practice the teaching received from the teacher through individual and group activities, so students learn in a communicative way; subsequently, teachers of English as a foreign language in large classes follow students' progress in multiple skills at the same time.
- ❖ Large classes bring about a significant negative impact on the student learning since a high number of students in large English classes said they have chance of cheating during the test, or of developing other subjects in the class activity.
- ❖ Strategies used by teachers for coping with large English classes are reasonably acceptable, and students are not very affected in the process of learning and teaching; consequently, this means that the teacher promotes a regular atmosphere in the classroom and in this way only a few students fall into acts of indiscipline or go unnoticed in classes.
- ❖ Large classes have a negative influence into learning activities because the teacher is not familiar with all students' names. As a result, the majority of students are not often demanded by the teacher to participate in classes.
- ❖ A high percentage of students in numerous classes acknowledge that they feel afraid to participate in class activities because they are just considered as an entire group; in addition, students feel nervous when speaking in front of their classmates due to the fact that they do not have an effective learning environment.
- ❖ Large classes have a substantial negative influence on the English teaching and learning because a high number of students experience stress in class activities;

in fact, not all students receive the teacher's attention, and thus the students are not motivated for generating their own ideas for a better participation in classes.

- ❖ Large classes have a significant negative effect on the teaching and learning of English; in fact, not many students receive a good feedback from the teacher, and this implies that some students acquire an inappropriate behavior, and others who feel fear when they pass in front of the classroom.

Recommendations

- ❖ Considering that the number of students per class surpasses the teachers' ability to properly monitor students, teachers should involve an active student interaction by promoting the maximum use of communicative and cooperative activities based on small groups working in games, role-playing, information gaps, and by providing a regular feedback for their students in the classroom.
- ❖ Some strategies should be applied by the teacher for giving an equal attention to students into the classroom activities that allow them to generate their own ideas; for instance, check in with students about how they are progressing with an assignment, call on the student in class, and stay moving.
- ❖ The teacher with a big number of students in one class should have clear guidelines in order to ensure the student motivation with problems of shyness or fear; by putting students to work in pairs or small groups, by maintaining oral classes, by contributing to discussions, and by showing empathy and understanding.
- ❖ Teachers in big classes should quickly memorize students' names in order to enhance the student's participation through some teaching strategies or techniques; for instance, working into pair and group, using students' names as often as possible, giving individual attention, and using cards or flashcards.
- ❖ In this study, students demonstrated negative and positive responses toward teaching and learning English. Consequently, teachers of large classes should get enrolled in a process of workshops and courses, so that they can improve their English language proficiency level, and make use of strategies that enhance teaching English in large classes.

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ANNEXES

Appendix N° 2

INSTRUMENTS



UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA

La Universidad Católica de Loja

OPEN AND DISTANCE MODALITY

ENGLISH DEGREE

Dear student,

The aim of this brief questionnaire is to obtain information concerning the: *influence of larges classes on teaching and learning English*. The following information will only be used for academic/research purposes. Please answer the following questions as honestly as possible based on the following criteria.

Very satisfactory:	Totally agree
Satisfactory:	Agree
Somewhat satisfactory:	Partially agree
Unsatisfactory:	Disagree

Informative data: Please fill in the information below

Name of institution: _____

Type of institution: Public () Private ()

Year of study: 8th year. () 9th year () 10th year. ()
 1st senior high school. () 2nd senior high school. () 3rd. senior high school. ()

City: _____

Instructions: place an (X) in the box that best reflects your personal opinion:

A. Academic issues

N°	In classes with a large number of students:	Very satisfactory	Satisfactory	Somewhat Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
1	The activities done in class help to apply what students learn in class.				
2	The activities done allow to practice listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.				
3	The students are attentive and participate in class activities, including those sitting at the back of the				

	classroom.				
4	Varied class activities are used such as group, individual, pair-work activities, etc.				
5	Activities such as plays, competitions, debates, games, etc. are used in class.				
6	Students can cheat during the test				
7	Students get distracted by doing assignments from other subjects.				
8	The seating arrangement facilitates the tasks that are carried out in class.				
9	Students cannot receive regular feedback from the teacher due to the large number of students.				

B. Social issues

N°	In classes with a large number of students:	Very satisfactory	Satisfactory	Somewhat satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
10	There is a proper balance of student-student and teacher-student interaction.				
11	Students have the opportunity to build relationships with their classmates.				
12	The teacher has problems remembering all the students' names.				
13	The atmosphere is less stressful since the teacher does not ask several				

	questions to the same student.				
14	It is easier for students to use their cell phone or any other mobile device without being seen by the teacher.				

C. Psychological issues

N°	In classes with a large number of students:	Very satisfactory	Satisfactory	Somewhat satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
15.	The atmosphere is stressful.				
16.	Students feel inhibited when speaking in front of the rest.				
17.	Students do not have the opportunity to express their opinions.				
18.	Students do not like to participate because they feel afraid.				
19.	The teacher does not pay equal attention to all his/her students.				
20.	Students feel they can act competitively with other students.				
21.	Students feel relaxed because they can go unnoticed.				

Thank you for your collaboration!